

Prophetical Observations

Occasion'd by Philosophy vol 6.

The New Comet:

And by other SIGNS in the HEAVENS, as
well lately past, as now approaching, Viz.

The late great Conjunction of JUPITER,
SATURN, and MARS.

The Transit of MERCURY in the Disk
of the SUN.

The Northern PHOENOMENA.

The Total Eclipse of the SUN.

Ostendit terris & in aire multa sereno,
Irrita nequaquam signa futura DEUS.
Signaque natura qua non imitantia leges,
Portendunt subitum non procul esse malum.
Vidimus hoc anno rapidum flagrare Cometem,
Sulcantem dubias multa per astra vias.
Quodque fuit mirum, vicino sole Cometae,
Cum soleant primas arripuisse faces.
a Philippo Melanchtone
de Comet. Mag.

L O N D O N :

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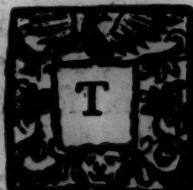
John C. Scott



Phophetical Observations

Occasion'd by the

The New Comet, &c.



HE Endeavours of the Learned Philosophers of this AGE, to rob their MAKER of his Honour, &c. by tying down all the *Phænomena* of the Heavenly Bodies to thir Natural Causes, and thereby denying the Agency of Providence in all those things, is now grown so scandalous, that they are justly contemn'd by Good Men, every way as knowing in those things, as themselves.

As they take Pains to exclude all portentous Significations from the Motions and Aspects of the Heavenly Bodies, so they would seem to make the Starry and Planetary World independent even of HEAVEN itself.

As if the infinite Power that made all these vast Bodies, cou'd not as well have made them significant of things to come, as have directed the Wonders of their Motions.

I shall not enter into a Dispute with these self-learn'd People at all, but confining myself to the more serious Part of the World, and without any Regard to these Astronomical Nations, I conclude what they cannot deny, thus, viz. That the Great Maker of the World has so appointed it, that before the coming of great and national Judgment, there are ordinarily Signs in the Heavens, and on the Earth; and that these Signs have in all Ages, been regarded by the wisest and best of Men, who have from thence taken Occasion to warn the World of what they may reasonably expect upon such Appearances.

As to the Contempt which some Men put upon all this; making a Jeit of all the serious Part, and bantering the awful Regard that Good Men shew to them, I shall treat it as it deserves; that is to say, with the utmost Contempt, and so shall bring the World to a Ballance; for as they contemn us, we condemn them; and so we may leave the Quarrel where we find it.

Before I suggest what may come to pass, as the Consequence of these Appearances in the Heavens, which we expect to see, it seems very rational to put the World in mind of what has happen'd in Consequence of such *Phænomena* as have been already seen.

It was the 27th of November last, that we had a visible *Eclipse* of the Sun.

The 29th of December following, was a triple Conjunction of the three great Planets, *Saturn*, *Jupiter*, and *Mars*; that Conjunction being in *Sagittarius*, the Sun being at the same time in *Capricorn*. With-

Without entering into the Astrological Calculations, with which we might amuse the World on that Subject, and the malignant Aspects of the several Planets upon that great Occasion, let us a little observe what has already been seen in the World, which may reasonably be suppos'd to be either the natural Consequences of those great Conjunctions, or portended and predicted by them.

That Eclipse of the Sun, as it is suppos'd by the Sons of Art, was greater, and more visible, in the *Eastern* Parts of the World, than it was here, and as it seem'd to portend great Changes and Confusions in that Part of the World; has it not been follow'd by two evident and remarkable Convulsions in those *Eastern Countries*?

I. The great and fatal Revolution in *Persia*, which has not only overturn'd the whole Government and Constitution of that ancient and vastly extended Empire; but, as we hear, has been fatal to the Royal Family, and to the poor People; and even besides a Sea of Blood already spilt in that Country, threatens the utter Overthrow of the Monarchy, and the Dissolution of *Persia* as a Kingdom; that vast Country being like to be divided between two powerful Neighbours, the *Turks* and the *Muscovites*; and the *Persian* Name to be lost in the World.

II. The Death of the Emperor of *China*, which, as we already hear, has been follow'd with great Confusions and Distractions in that vast Empire, which they tell us, is like to be broken in Pieces, by the Pretenders, (Sons to the late deceas'd Emperor,) who all claim a Right to the Succession; who are in the Field with great

great Armies, every one seizing on what Part of the Monarchy they can lay-hold of.

Had any such extraordinary Events happen'd in this or any neighbouring Part of the World, subsequent to such eminent foregoing Incidents as these of the *Eclipse*, or the Conjunctions above-nam'd, we should have made no Scruple of saying that they, *viz.* the said Conjunction and *Eclipse* were evident Fore-runners of those Events, and plainly predicted them to the World, and that we had been in the Right to have warn'd the World of some extraordinary Event near at hand, and that some dreadful Judgment was to be expected.

And why are those terrible things the less to be observ'd by us, for their being remote, and for our having no Share in the Distress of those Nations ? We may indeed, be thankful to Heaven that we are not involv'd in the Calamity, but it is not at all the less a Proof that those Appearances were predicting, and perhaps, influencing them, and consequently other such or such like *Phænomena* may in like manner be predicting, and even influencing upon us, when they happen in such Signs as this Part of the World are more particularly concern'd in.

As I will not venture to assert how far Conjunctions of Planets or their Oppositions, or other Aspects may be either Causes or Procurers, or Fore-runners of such and such Events, and to such or such Parts of the World as they more particularly point at, so it is extremely arrogant to affirm, that they are no way concern'd either as Causes, or Fore-runners, and that no heed at-all is to be given to them ; and those that have advanc'd such things positively, have sometimes found so strange

strange a Connection between the said Appearances, and the Events, that they have been confounded even with the probability.

But to come nearer Home, with the said Appearances of the past Year; it was said by the most skillful Astrologers, that the Consequence of those Conjunctions would appear in unhealthy Air, unseasonable Weather, excessive Heat or Cold, violent Storms, extreme Heat, long and fatal Drought, and other ordinary and extraordinary Convulsions in Nature, which would tend to the manifest Detriment of the Country to which these Aspects had a regard.

Now it is evident, that ever since those Conjunctions happen'd, Nature has, as it were, suffer'd Violence; from what Causes, whether from that Conjunction itself, as the Cause, or from some previous Collection of poisonous Vapours which those Conjunctions might predict, that, I say, remains doubtful; but that it has been so, let that strange unnatural, or at best, unusual Concurrence of intemperate Seasons, testify.

At first, an uncommon continuance of Cold, and *Northerly* Winds always blowing from the *North* and *North-West*, or *North-East* Corners, not in the Spring only, but even beyond the Summer-Solstice; so that the vernal Influence was quite lost; not only cultivated Plants did not grow, or at least, did not thrive, but even the very Weeds in our Gardens did not grow as usual; the weather continued dry and cold, sterile and barren, bringing Vermin, and devouring every green thing; and sometimes so universal a Drought, as threatened Ruin to the Expectation of the Farmer; and in short, a general Drought, even to Barrenness and Famine.

Without doubt the Influence of those Planets, the most powerful Agents upon the Climate which we live in, might reach into this Country, attracting, and perhaps, consuming all the moist Vapours which Nature may have at first provided for fructifying the Earth ; and for want of which, that Drought prevail'd to such a height as we find it did.

If that unseasonable Drought, which has been so universally fatal to all this Island of *Britain*, and to the Northern Parts of *Europe*, for so far we find it has extended, has been occasion'd by a strong Attraction of Vapours from the Influence of that great Conjunction ; then it may be true, that the Great Eclipse now approaching, may have Influences of like, or worse, Consequence to the World : Note, that I say, *may have*, and tho' perhaps, I might say, *shall have* it, and with good Authority too, yet I shall leave it to the World to judge of the Validity of those Conjectures, by the Consequences ; only that I shall take upon me with the greatest Certainty, to say, that at least, these Appearances have as much probable Signification, as any that have happen'd within the Memory of the oldest Man living ; and this I mention, signifying at the same time, that there seems to be, very strong Impressions of fore-boding Circumstances, as well in those past, as in these now approaching.

Some are of Opinion, that the present Scene of publick Tranquillity, which at present spreads the Face of *Europe*, foretels even of itself, a sudden Interruption ; and that it has been often observ'd, that there never was a general Quiet that held so compleatly calm, above one Year at a time, over so great a Part of the World.

May this general Observation be contradicted by the long-lasting Peace of Mankind; no honest-meaning Person desires the Confusion of his Fellow-Creatures, in my Opinion; but this is certain, that there has not been for any Age within our Memory, or within the Reach of History, a Time when so many concurring Signs in the Heavens, have come together, or within so narrow a Compass of Time, and all of them so significant, and so portending things of Consequence to the World.

Eclipses themselves are not very frequent; *Eclipses* of the *Sun* are less frequent than of the *Moon*; but Total *Eclipses* of the *Sun* are yet more rare; and it is my Opinion, that none of those *Eclipses* come without an Errand; so when they are so very remarkable, no doubt but that they are loaded with the more Business, and have Errands of so much the greater Consequence.

Let then the Pretenders to Art, endeavour in what Manner they please, to take off the Awe which those extraordinary *Phænomena* would justly imprint upon the Minds of the People, and oppose the honest Intentions of those that look higher than the meer Natural Causes of things: But 'tis impossible, while Heaven suffers such great Events to follow in the very Neck of these *Phænomena*, I say, 'tis impossible for them to persuade the World, that *God* has no Hand in these things.

S E C T. III.

HAving made some Way in the former Sections for the Reasons which may be given for believing the Influence of these Appearances, I cannot but think it will confirm us in this Judgment, if from History and Antiquity I give some Account as far as the short Space of a Pamphlet will allow, of such *Comets* or *Eclipses*, as have appear'd in an extraordinary Manner, and have so immediately been follow'd by extraordinary Events, that it has been next to impossible to separate the Sign and the Thing signify'd; and as have particularly been allow'd by the concurrent Opinion of all Ages, to intimate those extraordinary Events.

1. History tells us, there was a terrible *Comet* appear'd before the ten Plagues in *Egypt*, and the drowning of *Pharoah* and his Army in the Read-Sea, *Anno Mundi*, 2454.

2. It is also recorded, that a *Comet* appear'd in the Days of *Abraham*, immediately before the Promise given him that his Seed shold posess the Land of *Canaan*; and some Historians intmate, that it was by that *Comet* that the Cities of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* were set on fire, and destroy'd

3. A great Fax, or Fir-Torch, or *Comet*, of a horrible Figure, appear'd over *Afriea*, and over all *Spain*, to the great Terror of the People, which was follow'd by the Ruin of the *Carthaginian Empire*,

Empire, and after by the final Destruction of the City of *Carthage*, and the Conquest of all *Spain* by the *Romans*.

4. A great *Comet* was seen in *Italy*, which was follow'd by that surprising Attempt which destroy'd the common Liberty of *Rome*, and subjected the *Roman Government* to absolute Tyranny, when *Julius Cesar* past the *Rubicon*, and seiz'd upon the Government of the whole *Roman World*; the same *Comet* appear'd again just before *Cesar's* Death.

5. The Star or *Comet* in the *East*, immediately preceding the Birth of our Saviour, and which was so exceeding Bright, that it shone by Day, and stood over the City of *Bethlehem*, where the Wise Men came by that Direction, to worship our Lord.

6. A terrible *Comet* which appear'd at first in the shape of a burning Torch, afterwards in the usual figure of what is vulgarly call'd a Blazing-Star, shew'd itself *Anno Dom. 17*, in the Sign γ ; this was follow'd, first by the Death of the Emperor *Augustus*, which then ruled the whole known World, which happen'd the very next Year; and next, by a terrible Earthquake in *Asia*, by which twelve considerable Cities in that Quarter of the World were swallow'd up; and the same Year in another Earthquake, the three Cities of *Ephesus*, *Sardis*, and *Magnesia*, were almost buried alive, and an innumerable Multitude of People perish'd. N. B. with this *Comet* was said to be seen an *Eclipse* of the *Moon* for three Nights together.

7. That frightful *Comet*, in the Figure of a flaming Sword, which for a whole Year together hung over the whole Country of *Judea*, but especially over *Jerusalem* before the *Roman's* be-

sieg'd that City ; and was imminently follow'd with the Destruction not only of that City, but of the whole Nation of the Jews and 1100000 People perish'd with it.

8. *Anno 367.* Julian the Apostate having in despight to the name of C H R I S T, and to the Christians, carel'sd the Jews, and given orders to rebuild the Temple of *Jerusalem* in a most magnificent Manner ; a terrible *Comet* appear'd in the middle of the Day, which out-shone the Sun itself, during which, (and the *Comet* just then appearing very particulafly Bright) a terrible Thunder breaking upon the new Work, or Building, the Flashes took hold of the Building, consum'd all that was combustible, and at the same time a violent horrible Earthquake overthrew the rest, and 17000 Jews perish'd, partly burnt with the Lightning, and partly swallow'd up alive in the Earth.

9. *Anno 457.* A frightful *Comet* of a vast Magnitude, appear'd over *Great-Britain* in particular, in the shape of a Fiery Dragon ; out of the Head or Mouth of this Dragon, there came forth two Streams of Fire, one in the shape or likeness of a long Fiery or Flaming-Sword, pointing towards *France* ; and the other a large and broader Flame, pointing towards *Ireland* ; which last Flame branch'd itself out, and ended in seven smaller Streams of Fire, pointing the same way ; this terrible *Comet* was, besides the Calamities which follow'd in the *Roman Empire*, follow'd by a terrible Plague in this Country, and in all *Ireland*, as also spreading over all the Northern Part of *Europe* ; which Plague this horrible *Phenomenon* was said not only to predict, but also to be the Cause of.

10. Anno 1066, a very Fiery colour'd Comet appear'd in *England* just before the landing of *William the Norman*, afterwards call'd *William the Conqueror*; of which the antient English Poets sung, as Follows,

A Thousand sixty-Six,

It was, as we do read,
When as a COMET did appear,
And English-Men lay Dead.

11. Anno 1572. A horrible and frightful Comet appear'd before the Massacre of *Paris*, in which 30000 Protestants were murther'd in cold Blood in that and the other Cities of *France*, and was follow'd by a Civil-War also.

12. Anno 1664, and 1665. Two Comets appear'd impending mostly over *England*, and the City of *London*, but seen also over all the Northern Parts of *Europe*, and which were follow'd by that terrible Plague, which swept away innumerable Numbers of People in *England*, *Holland*, and the lower *Germany*; and even in the City of *London*, almost an hundred Thousand People died, besides more than as many in the other Parts of the Kingdom.

In singling out these twelve Comets, I would not have the Reader suppose there were no other Comets appearing in all that time; I might fill a large Book with an Account of them; but I single out these more remarkable Comets, because the Events which follow'd them, are more particularly remarkable in History, and known almost to all the reading Part of the World; and because they were more eminently observ'd to be portentous of those Events, which came so immediately after them.

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These twelve therefore, may suffice to evidence, that our being able to assign Natural Causes for the Production and Appearance of all these things, does not at all hinder that God may think fit to order even those Natural Effects of Natural Causes to import Good or Evil approaching; as well as that in Thunder, Lightning; for which Natural Causes are always assign'd, and justly too, yet when Heaven pleases to make use of them to burn and destroy Houses, and Towns, or People, they are no less Judgments on those destroy'd Places than they were before.

Since then, there is so apparent a Connection between the extraordinary Motions and Aspects of the Heavenly Bodies, and the great Affairs, Revolutions, and Convulsions of this Lower World, let us see what Conclusions we may reasonably draw from the things of this Kind, which are before us at this time.

That there are so many concurring Signs in the Heavens, appearing at this time, signifies, at first Sight, that something extraordinary may be expected from behind the dark Curtain of Futurity; the Fate of Kingdoms, and of Persons, is indeed, obscure; but even those Obscurities are, in a great measure, *lin'd* or *mark'd* out to us in these things: If *Comets*, *Eclipses*, *Conjunctions of Planets*, and the evil and malignant Aspects of Stars and Planets, are Messengers of good or bad Tidings; much more may we suggest them to be so, when they come crowded together, one at the Heels of another, and when there are not only Signs in the Heavens, *that is*, in the Starry Heavens, and Signs on the Earth; but when the laid Starry Heavens may be said to be full of Signs.

I have observ'd, that the late *Triple Conjunction* of the Planets, *Saturn*, *Jupiter*, and *Mars*, hap-
pen'd

pen'd in the Beginning of the present Year, that is to say, the 29th of December, which I call the Beginning of the Year, because the Influences of the Conjunction did not work here, till the Beginning of the Month of February following ; I say, I have observ'd, that this Conjunction, *which some call'd terrible*, was spoken of, as threatening the Encrease of the Plague from the Southermost Parts of France, to these Parts of the World, and that it was to happen this past Summer : And those who delight in being the Messengers of evil Tidings, *as most of the pretending Predictors love to do*, fill'd us with Fears, that those Planets so conjoin'd, wou'd certainly forebode the Plague, as above.

On the contrary, it was always my Opinion, and I am confirm'd in it by many Tokens, that they not only did foretel that we shou'd not have the Plague break out among us, but that they were really merciful Instruments *to prevent it* : Now if we can once reason ourselves into a probable Certainty that these Phænomena are really instrumental to bring, or to prevent the Evil we speak of, we may much more easily grant, that they do so and so predict ; for 'tis easie to believe, that a Planet, or Conjunction, or Aspect of a Planet, is a Fore-runner of such a thing, if we can, previous to it, come to a Knowledge of its being the real Cause of it, or but partly the Cause of it.

Thus I think the great Conjunction just now mention'd, which happen'd on the said 29th of December last, was really a Sign to us for Good, as to the Infection in France, that it shou'd not spread itself this way ; because, I believe, by its Attraction and Influence, it drew off all the noxious Vapours, and those poisonous contagious Particles which the Air in the Southern Parts of France was at

at that time full of, and cartied them clear out of this Part of the World ; like as I observe, it has drawn away the moist Vapours of another Kind, that us'd to supply the necessary Rains, and by which Means the Air has been left, as it were, vacant; and void, and not furnish'd with a sufficient Quantity of Humid to supply the Clouds ; by which Means also the *late Drought* was occasion'd, which we at this Time feel the Effects of.

If then by the Attraction of the Planets *so in Conjunction*, a great Drought has ensued, not in *England* only, but in all the *Northern Part of Europe*, as we see has been now the Case ; why may not the same Attraction of the Planets *so in Conjunction*, as above, draw away the infectious Particles in the Air, and occasion the Healthiness of these Parts of the World, and so not only portend the Good to us. but be the real *Natural Cause* of it ?

AGAIN come we from hence, to the present Signs now approaching in, and perhaps, already influencing the Affairs, or Constitution and Temperature of this Part of the World ; whether as to the Health of the Seasons, or of Persons ; the Fruitfulness, or Sterility of the Earth ; the Power of contagious Collections in the Air ; their Encrease, or Decrease, and the like ; the Case is much the same.

If it be possible that the Aspects of the Heavenly Bodies shou'd, by their approaching Position, intimate contagious Air, corrupted stagnated Vapours, &c. and that, according to the Rules of *Astrology* it were rational to conclude, that they were the Occasion of it ; that they fill'd, or help'd to fill the Air with those corrupted Fumes, and contagious Vapours ; Why shou'd it be thought criminal, to suggest, or to predict then, that

that those Positions shou'd be follow'd by Plague and Mortality ? and why, notwithstanding, shou'd not those Plagues and Mortality, be call'd a Judgment, or the Judgments of G o d ? seeing all the Contagions and Mortalities that attend Mankind, are at least, permitted, and I suppose, directed by the Hand of *Heaven*, and are very modestly call'd the *Judgments of G O D*; from what Natural Causes soever they may may be produc'd.

Thus 'tis evident, *Comets* and *Eclipses*, *Conjunctions*, *Oppositions*, and other *Aspects* of the *Planets* and *Stars*, may portend G o d's Judgments upon a Nation or Country, where they appear; and consequently, it is neither unreasonable, or ill-grounded, to warn the Nations to prepare for such Judgments, in a Christian and serious Manner.

On the contrary then, to contemn these things; to ascribe all to Natural Causes ; to exclude the Influences of the *Stars*, *Comets*, *Planets*, &c. from any Concern in such Events ; and make Sport with, and ridicule the just Predictions of such Events, and all the Warnings that Good Men give on that Account, is *Impious* and *Atheistical*, and tends to lessening the Awe of the Supreme Power, and of Heaven's Judgment in the Minds of Men ; and at the same time, it is acting contrary to the Reason and Nature of the thing ; against Experience, and against evident Probabilities also ; which, I venture to say, no wise Man wou'd willingly be guilty of : Let those that act thus, consider of it, or not, as they think fit.

S E C T. III.

Having thus asserted the Reasonableness of Predicting Good or Evil, Heaven's Favours and Deliverances, or *Plagues and Judgments*, as impending over, or approaching to, a Nation, from the *Aspects of the Stars*, from the *Conjunctions of Planets*, &c. and especially, from the Appearance of *Comets*; I come next to speak of the present Appearances mention'd in my Title; and first, of the late great Conjunction of *Saturn*, *Jupiter*, and *Mars*, spoken of before.

F I R S T, 'Tis evident, that as the late immoderate and unseasonable Weather, such as *Cold* in the Season of *Heat*, and *Warmth* in the Season of *Cold*, *Drought* continued in a manner, and for so long a Season, as has not been known for many Ages; *Northerly* and *Easterly* Winds, with very little Intermission, for above eight Months, even in the Summer; *I say*, as these have been certainly the Effects of that late Conjunction of the Planets, *Jupiter*, *Saturn*, and *Mars*, on the 29th of December last; so it is very evident, that the Operation of that *Conjunction* is not yet fully over: The uncommon Drought, with very little Intermission of Rain, has continued; the Fruits of the Earth, if common Fame may be credited, have had an unusual Mixture of Venom in them; the Juices which used to be of a cooling and nourishing, and refreshing Nature, have, this Year, been

been *Pernicious*, I had almost said *Poisonous*, to humane Bodies ; and have been, and still are, productive of Diseases, Gripings, Vomitings, Fluxes, &c. which have been Epidemick, throughout this Nation in particular.

N. B. This intimates that those Influences have, so far as they do affect any Country, more particularly affected this Country ; and consequently the other Signs, whose Influences are perhaps, now begun, may do the same.

In the Consequence of this Observation, I may venture to add, that, as I say, this Operation *is not yet over*, I expect, (NOTE, I say EXPECT) the Opposer may expect as he pleases, as intemperate a Sealon thro' the Winter, as we have had thro' the Summer, tho' not so fatal to the Health of the People.

If the Influence of the fatal Conjunction of Planets, has thus far shewn its Effects in our Country ; I have Reason also to believe they have yet more Powerful Influences in other Parts of the World ; and I do think it shall affect foreign Countries in that Kind, more than these Countries.

From hence it may probably come to pass, that tho' a Plague may not presently follow, or not at all, to those Countries ; yet that several mortal Distempers may affect the Bodies of Men, especially, in the Beginning and Close of the Winter-Season, rather than in the Middle of it ; and particularly, in *Holland, Flanders, Spain, and Portugal*, as well as, and more than, in *England*.

The Influence of this Conjunction seems to me to work Particularly in this Manner, namely, in affecting the Temperature of the Seasons ; now no Man will be so void of Reason, as to argue,

that the Temperature of the Air does not affect Humane Bodies, who breathe in that Air ; and consequently, the Diseases or Health to which those Bodies are subject, are govern'd, in a great measure, by the said Conjunction of Planets.

If any Man ask me then, what will be the Consequence thro' the coming Winter, of the Influence of this late Conjunction, and what Operation it may have had upon the Air ? what Changes it may produce in the Season ? and the like ; I shall say, *It is probable*, that as we have had long *Northerly* and *Easterly* Winds, even during the whole Continuance of the said Conjunction, occasion'd still by the strong Attraction *Southward*, that *Conjunction* falling out, as is said, in *Sagittarius*, and affected by the *Sun's* being in *Capricorn*, I may be allow'd to say, 'tis probable the same Attraction may continue thro' the whole Influence of that Conjunction, which is yet for some time ; and consequently this may bring long and severe Cold from those *North* and *North-Eastern* Parts of the World which those Winds blow from.

And yet from the same Probable Causes a true Judgment will infer, that these long Colds may be interrupted with some moderate Weather ; so that it may not be any long continued Severity of Frost, such as was felt here in 1684 ; but that there may be Intervals of thawing, warm Weather, for eight or ten Days together.

All this I mention as under the Influence of the late *Conjunction*, and of that *only* ; but if the Effects of the present *Comet*, which appears somewhat watry and flegmatick, shou'd concur with the other Influences to abate the Extremity of the Cold, then 'twill be very probable that we shall have an extraordinary Glut of *Wet*, long and heavy *Rains*, and perhaps, destructive *Floods* ; the Con-

Consequence of which, is, in a few Words, an unhealthy, sickly *Spring Season*.

On the other hand, there is room to judge by the Rules of right Reason, and of *Astrological Calculations* also, that the approaching Influences of the *Eclipse* may so far concur with those of the said *Conjunction* not yet over, as to continue the powerful Attractions mention'd above ; and if this should be so, I shall expect another *Blanket-Fair* upon the *Ice*, and to see Hackney-Coachess plying again upon the *Thames* ; as was the Case just Forty Years ago.

Thus much for the *Appearances* already past.

I come next to speak of the extraordinary *Comet*, which is an *Appearance* just now in Being.

The Accounts we have by Astronomers, of this *Comet*, are just sufficient to give us the following *Idea of it, viz.*

That it is a small *Comet*, that is to say, in its *Appearance* ; for the Sight being yet uncertain, it may be in itself infinitely greater, than we at present imagine.

The Tail, or Blaze of the *Comet*, is not Proportion'd to the usual Length of other such *Stars*, being extended not much more than one Diameter of the *Star*, or Body of the *Comet* itself. Mr. *Whiston* has Publish'd, among other things, a little Scheme, or Plan, of the *Appearance* itself, with a short View of the Curve, or Arch of its Motion, by which it appears to have pass'd by the *Star*, in the end of the Napkin, as they call it, of *Aquarius, East* ; then by the Arm of *Antinous, West* ; then sweeping towards the *Eagle*, it will pass by the middle *Star* in the *Eagle Parallel to it, West*.

By

By this Course of the *Comet*, if it came a little lower, we should have a very clear View of its whole Extent, from seven, to near ten a-Clock every Evening; from whence, without descending to any farther Enquires into the Signs in which it may appear, and its proper Aspects, I think 'tis sufficient to say, that this *Comet* being evidently plac'd in our *Meridian*, may claim to be in particular, regarded as a Signal to us, and that as much, as if its Course had been nearer to to us.

Thus having appropriated its Influences, and prov'd our Title to the Effects, let us see what by Reason or Philosophy, or by Revelation, impulse, or other Powers, we may think proper to say of it.

The little Presages which some People amuse us with upon this Subject, *namely*, that it portends strife of Parties, Quarrels at Court, long Speeches within Doors, libelling and lampooning in Print, *and such trifles*; as they are too mean to mention in a thing of this importance, I omit; I think verily when we concern the *Stars* in the Fatality of Ballad-singing, and making Verses upon Whores, Princes, great Courtiers, Ecclesiasticks, &c. we may be suppos'd to be very barren of just Observations; we might with much more Justice have expected a *Comet* or an *Eclipse* to have foretold the Ruin of the *Harburg* Lottery, and the expelling the L---d B---- out of the House of Commons.

Had a *Comet* appear'd just before the late Fall of *South-Sea Stock*, and the Catastrophe of the Family of the *Cragg's* and *A---bies*, or the downfall of the Directors, we might indeed, have thought it a Prognostick, that, being an Affair of National Importance; but to entitle the

Stars

Stars to prognosticate the Disappointment of a few Warburgh Cheats, and the Eclipse of an Irish Lord, would but make an universal Hisse pass thro' the World at the Calculators of such things, as there did at the People I speak of.

But we must look higher, much higher for the import of these Appearances ; as this Comet is one of God's Messengers, so no doubt it comes on its Master's Errand ; if it has a Message we may and ought to enquire what it is ; and no wise Man will despise the Search ; if it has none, we shall be not the worse for the Search, or regret the Disappointment.

The usual Judgments with which Heaven visits Mankind, are Wars, Plagues, contagious Diseases, Famine, Tempest, and Storms, of Lightning, Thunder, Wind, and Rain, Earthquakes, &c.

The three first of these seem to be what the World, at this time, are most apprehensive of, and that not without great Reason ; the rest in the ordinary Course of Nature are seldom so extensive as these, neither are the Consequences so fatal ; for Example.

Famine, by the Interposition of Commerce, is so securely fenc'd against, that unless God shou'd lock up the Windows of Heaven, or dry-up the Rivers and Springs, throughout all Europe, it wou'd be hardly possible that any Nation cou'd be distress'd with a Famine, in such a manner, the Scarcity of one Country is now supply'd from the Plenty of another, and while Trade is open, and Navigation free, there is scarce any just Reason to fear a Scarcity of Bread : For Example, Poland and England by the ordinary Produce of the Earth, supposing all the other Maritime Countries of Europe had a Scarcity of Corn, are able to supply sufficient for all their Wants ;

I mean with this *Supposition* only, viz. that with *Poland* we include the Countries adjoining to *Poland*, such as *Prussia*, *Courland*, *Livonia*, and the Shores of the *Baltick*, from *Pomerania*, Eastward, which are all Corn-Countries ; and that with *England*, we include *Scotland* and *Ireland*.

On the other-hand, the Coast of *Barbary*, how hot and barren soever it may be suggested to be, by reason of great Heats, yet is a Fund or Magazine of Corn for *France*, *Italy*, and other Parts of *Europe* on that side, as *Egypt* is for *Constantinople*, and the like : Now, unless all these Countries fail together, no general Famine can oppress the Christian World ; and 'tis for this Reason that I mention it ; and let all those *Astrologers* who would fright the World with Apprehensions of eating one another for want of Bread, examine this Part more strictly, and they will find that no Aspects of Planets will foretel any thing of that kind, sufficient, to make the World believe them, unless they will take upon them to assure us, that the Windows of Heaven shall be stopp'd, and that *God* shall break his Word with Mankind, wherein he has assur'd us all, that *Seed-time, and Harvest should not fail*, to the end of the World.

Since then Nature seems to forbid a *Famine*, except as above, by a general stop of the Fountain of our Supply ; it would be preposterous and arrogant to the last Degree, if we should give heed to those who from their *Astrological Calculations* take upon them to threaten us with it ; for Providence never, or very rarely, acts out of the ordinary Course of Natural Causes.

But to come nearer ; neither does the *Aspect* of this *Comet* threaten the World with Earthquakes and Tempests, Blasts, Storms, and the like,

like, tho' as the Consequence of an exceeding wet Season in the Beginning of the Year, it may be very probable that such Excessive Rains will (as is usually the Case) be attended with very high Winds; but by the Tempests which I mention, I do not mean such desolating Tempests as make Havock of Houses, Fleets, and whole Towns, to the Ruin of Kingdoms and Nations, as were those violent Tempests in 1703, and the like.

But altho' this *Comet* should not immediately portend *Famine*, *Earthquakes*, *Storms* and *Tempests*, yet I see greater Calamities in view, wherewith the *Northern Parts* of the World may be visited, and that within the reach of a few Years; for *Heaven* is oftentimes so merciful in the ordering such things as these, that it is but seldom that the World is all involv'd in Judgments together; nor do a Complication of such things always fall together; so that the People who can shift from Place to Place, always find room to make their Escapes, and fly from the *Wrath to come*; upon this Account Warnings are oftentimes chiefly sent, that as the Scripture says, *the Prudent Man foreseeing the Evil, may hide himself*, so that the wiser Part of Mankind may guide themselves by that Rule.

But to wave all that Part, as a Dispute which does not at all concern the present Case, every Man must be left to guide his own Affairs *as he thinks fit*; he that will open his Eyes, and look into the Events of things, may, and will have the *Advantage* in the ordinary Course of Providence; but they that will not, must take the other Part of the Text to themselves, *viz. the Simple pass on, and are punish'd*.

As to directing People here to look into Futurety, by *Astrological Calculations*, that is not

the Intent of this Work, farther than this, that if those *Astrologers* concur with these Thoughts on this Subject, *so be it*, they are perhaps, so much nearer the Truth, and if just Conclusions are drawn by several Ways, and agree in the Substance, they are so much the more likely to be just Conclusions.

Some are able to predict from a whole View of Nature, with much greater Certainty in Events of the niceſt Kind, than others are from the most exact Tables, which they call *Rules of Art*, and therefore, at the ſame time, leaving the Artists to talk in their own Way, I ſhall ſpeak of these things in a Dialect by itſelf.

The Appearance of a *Comet* I take to intimate, generally ſpeaking, approaching Calamities, upon ſome or ſuch particular Parts of the World, where ſuch *Comet* is more eſpecially directed; and it is because, it has been ſo, that the World expects ſurprizing Revolutions on ſuch Occasions; as also War, Devaſtation, and Blood, and other desolating Judgment from Heaven upon the Bodies of Men.

The Appearance of *Eclipses*, and *Conjunction* of Planets, I take to intimate rather the ſupreme Hand by them Influencing the Seasons, the Weather, the Temperature of the Air, and the Bodies of Men; for by the Means of these, they may indeed, as by evident Natural Caufes, affect the Bodies of Men, and bring Inflection and Contagion, raging Fevers, Apoplexies, and the like; by which Men are ſwept away as by a Plague.

We have ſeen this in *England* within a few Months paſt, and that in a very remarkable Manner, when the Inclement Seasons had ſo ſwift an Operation upon the Bodies of the People, that

that Thousands were swept away, first by that overflowing kind of Plague, *the Small-Pox*, which rag'd in a most terrible Manner in the Beginning of the Year ; when the Operation of the late Conjunction was in its first Progrefs ; and afterwards in a general Disorder in the Intestines, attended with Convulsions in the Bowels, Gripings, Fluxes, and Vomitings, while the said Operation of Planets was in its height ; during which time the Bills of Mortallity in *London* were so high, as the like had not been known since the great Plague, in the Year 1665, being very near 800 per Week ; tho' at a time when by the Absence of the Court, the recess of Parliament, Vacation of the Term, and the usual retreat of the People to their Country Seats and Lodgings for Pleasure, in the Summer Heats, the emptiness of the Town was more than usually remarkable ; so that had there been the usual Number of People in *London* then, as is about *Christmass*, or the Month of *January* and *February*, the Bills by a just Proportion, must have been suppos'd to be near 1100 each Week.

As these Distempers made such Havock among us, so *France* at this very Time, is under the Surprize of the like Visitation ; and the *Small-Pox* makes such Ravages there, and especially among the Nobility, and Persons of Distinction, that is terrible to relate.

The Kingdom of *Portugal*, and especially the great and Populous City of *Lisbon* is even now under the like Visitation, with a terrible and raging Fever, which carries off such Multitudes of People, and that in so sudden and so violent a Manner, that it has been greatly question'd whether it is not a Spice of a Pestilence, tho' we hope not.

While these things happen so openly in the World, and the Signal *Appearances* in the Heavens are so very remarkable also, how can we deny but that there is an *Apparent Connection* between the Causes and Effects? between the Sign and the Thing signified: The remote Conjunctions (which I have mention'd,) may have drawn off the Grofs of these noxious Vapours, and Pestilential Particles, which would otherwise have spread an Universal Infection upon the World, and yet by the influencing the Seasons, *as above*, they may have rendred the Air unwhole-some to a great Degree, tho' not contagious.

Let the very same Countries which just now begin, *as it were*, to feel the Effects of these Cælestial Signals, be our farther Warning; they will have yet a greater Tafte of the bitter Part, and I am perswaded to believe, a deeper Share in the Calamity, than they seem to be yet apprehensive of.

France has drunk deep of the Visitation in the *Southern* Parts already; it seems to be with more than ordinary Difficulty, that the Judgment is kept off; it broke-out the other Day in the *French* new Conquests, the Province of *Artois*, and the Frontiers of *Picardy*; may I not say without Arrogance, that it will not go entirely off?

The *Eclipse* is not yet come; the *Comet* appears remote, and at a Distance, and Men put the Evil Day far off; *may it be far off*, and especially from *our own Country*, where I doubt we are but ill prepar'd for such a Calamity; but he that will undertake to assure us, that all these Signs in the Heavens shall have no Significations, and shall be attended with no uncommon Calamities in *Europe*, will, if I have any

any Prophetick Judgment live to be ashamed of it, or die very quickly.

And let such remember, that tho' the *Eclipse* is not yet come, the *Comet* is come, and the Evil predicted may be already begun among us; and who dare say, *it is not already begun*: The Seeds of *Death* are sometimes long sow'd before the Fruit (*Mortality*) appears; let us depend that where ever the Blow is to be given, the Hand is, or may be, already lifted up to Strike.

Come we first then to consider those Signs that first present themselves to our Sight, as the *Comet* presaging bloody Wars breaking-out in the World, to the interrupting the Peace of Mankind; the Temple of *Janus* opens of itself; War breaks-out first in the *East*, but insensibly spreads itself *Northward*; one Nation unwarily entangles and draws in another, till the Nations grow furious and enraged; for War is a Fever in the Blood of Nations, as the Plague is in the Blood of private Persons, and spreads like an Infection not much unlike a Plague in the Body; neither are *Wars*, and the Rivers of Blood that follow them, less the Effects of Physical and Natural Causes, than *Plagues* and *Infections*.

I expect this *Comet* which advances to us from the *South*, from beyond the watery Sign *Aquarius*, Pours out an Innundation of Blood; first, in that Part of the World, where we see 'tis already begun viz. the Kingdom of *Persia*; and as the same *Comet* strikes its Path in the Arch of a monstrous Circle, from that Part of the Hemisphere *North-West*, I make no Question but it carries on the Innundation into the Countries, in that Manner situated from its first *Appearance*.

Hence

Hence War is intimated upon the Frontiers of the Turkish, the German, and the Muscovite or Russian Empires ; and I doubt not but it will be very swift, violent, and cruel.

After it has kindled in its own Flame, and encreas'd, according to the growing Nature of real Fire, I expect it to catch hold of neighbouring Kingdoms and Countries ; the Tranquility of Europe, a Blessing too great in itself, and too much abus'd, to be of long Continuance, must meet with Interruptions from wicked Heads ; and all the laudable Endeavours of Pious and Christian Powers to prevent it, will not so far succeed, but that the Evil determin'd may break out.

W A R then being suppos'd ; we are to expect it where Reason and Nature dictates it ; for all these things run still in the Channel of Nature ; the Czar of Muscovy has his Hands full in the South, Peace be thy happy Portion, O ! Sweden, if possible, so long as the growing Power of that Monarch feels the Restraint of other Avocations, but expect it no longer ; nor can it be conceal'd who breathes out War on that Side, with so eager a Desire that nothing but the Alliances of neighbouring Powers restrains him ; and how unwillingly he is restrain'd, may be easily seen.

Let them not doubt, but that the dormant Claims of the Duke of Holstein as well to the Dominions of Sweden, which he esteems his Right, as to other Dominions really his own, will rest quiet so long as he cannot help, and perhaps no longer.

In the Empire, Religion beats the Drum Ecclesiastick ; the Pope studies a Church-War, and stands ready to publish his Cruisado, as soon as he can bring Bigots enough into his Alliance ; that so he may embroil Europe in War, and keep himself out.

What

What have the *Protestants* to trust to, for preventing such a *Rupture* in the World? Truly, nothing that I see, but the keeping the Heads of such Catholick Powers as are most Potent, from engaging in such a bloody Confederacy; as it happens at present, it is not their Interest to do it, and while it is, we may expect they will keep off, but not longer; and how long it may be that their Interest shall so keep them back, who knows? 'Tis evident by their present Conduct, that they have Will enough to a Religious War, if they found it agreeable to their Temporal Prospects.

That such a War is within the Aspect of the Present Signs; especially that of the *Comet*, and of the *Eclipse*, the Astrologers particularly insist upon; I shall not contradict them; let the Protestant Princes, and Powers, in whose Hand the Ballance yet remains, and who are the Bulwarks of the Protestant Interest in the World, take care not to give it up, but concern themselves to prevent the Blow; and let them depend, that sooner or later, the Councils of Hell will so far prevail, as to make the Attempt; who shall prevail, is for the Present, out of Sight.

Whoever considers the State of *Europe*, and the Encroachments of the Papal Interests, how they have restlessly push'd at getting the Protestant Countries into the Hands of Popish Princes; what fatal Success they have had; how the two most Potent Electorates, *viz.* of *Saxony*, and the *Palatinate*, and the Kingdom of *Bohemia*, (all three formerly Protestants) are now entirely in the Hands of the Papists, and how they are continually pushing at more; how *France*, notwithstanding the late War, possesses several Countries, formerly *Protestant*, and from whence the Protestant Religion

ligion is entirely extirpated ; as *Alsacia* ; the Imperial City of *Strasburg* ; the Principality of *Orange*, and the like ; and above all, the utter rooting out of the Protestant Religion from *France* itself : Whoever, I say, considers all this, will find the Protestant Interest sunk extremely, from what it has been, as to the Extent of Country where it was receiv'd ; so that indeed, it hardly requires a Concurrence of Heavenly Signs to predict, that the Popish Powers will take hold of the first Occasion that presents itself, to attack the Protestants in the Quarrel of Religion ; and will not fail also, to form the Occasion with the utmost Artifice.

War also will probably break out sooner or later among the Maritime People of the World ; the Encroachments of the *Austrians* upon the Commerce of those Nations, who formerly spent their Blood and Treasure to procure those Countries to the House of *Austria* in which those Encroachments are set on foot ; I say, those Encroachments are not the most unlikely (especially while haughtily insisted upon, and obstinately push'd on) to set this Part of the World in a Flame ; the Commerce of the *Indies* is a tender Point, and so tender, that that Government, who at present have so great an Interest in it, cannot but be deeply sensible of any Wound in those Parts, and will certainly resent not the Thing only, but the Manner.

These are the Seeds of War, which seem to be already sow'd ; the Pride and Ambition of Men plant or sow those Seeds every Day ; but the governing Hand of Heaven directs the cultivating them, and ripening them up to the Maturity which they require for an Eruption ; and while all this is preparing, and the *Aparatus* thus form'd, *Heaven* directs his Signs in the upper Regions, to warn us of the Approach, and prepare us for what

what he intends to visit us with : And thus you have the fatal Climax of Causes, and Effects of Warning, and Signs in the Heavens plainly laid down ; and 'tis easie to observe the Concourse of the Signs with the Probabilities.

From the whole, I conclude, that a Bloody War will break-out in *Europe* in the ensuing Year, or within the Limits of the Influence of the Approaching *Eclipse*, or of the present *Comet* : That this War shall be attended with Rivers of Blood, or, as is mention'd above, with an Innundation of Blood, may, without much Art, be predicted : In particular, we may see that the *Tartars*, who oftentimes have done so, and now wait an Opportunity to do it again, may now, by the Permission of Heaven, to break the way, begin the horrid Scene of Tragedy, by a dreadful Eruption into the *Russian* Dominions : If they make their retreat without an overthrow, they will, besides the Murther and Rapine they commit in the Attempt, carry away vast Numbers of miserable Christians into Slavery, to be sold to the *Turks* ; and from thence 'tis very rational to expect, that *Poland* may have its Share in the Miseries of a *Turkish* War, especially if the *Turks* are any-thing successful ; and *Poland* may very probably engage the *Imperial* and *German* Armies in its Defence ; and then the *Turks* will be driven Headlong out of the Christian Countries, and may be driven out of *Europe*, if the Christian Princes would heartily join together to bring it to pass.

I am loth to take upon me to predict any Evil to *Great-Britain*, to whom I wish nothing but Good ; if the *Comet* goes away, or disappears without advancing any farther *North*, then the

brightest of the three Stars in the Neck of *Aquila*; I mean, so as to be visible no farther *North*, I shall have hope that it shall be attended with no evil Events relating to us; nay, its disappearing in that Constellation may betoken Good to us; for as *Comets* are Fore-runners of Evil, and give warning of Calamities to some, so they may be Fore-runners of good Tidings to others; as the *Comet* in 1066, which doubtless portended the Conquest of *England* by Duke *William* of *Normandy*, as on one hand it fore-boded Slaughter and Subjection, and miserable Sufferings to the *English* Nation, so it imported Joy and Victory to the Conqueror, crowning him with Glory, and his Posterity after him; and thus, it may be now: May all that is joyful, good and agreeable, all that we want, and all that we seek, be the happy Event of this appearing *Comet* to *Great-Britain*; to which end may we see no more of it, or at least, may it come no farther *North*, than as above.

Some tell us, that in all probability this *Comet* may be more visible in *America*, than among us; and this is so remote from us, that I expect to be told, it is not worth mentioning, or worth reading, much less entertaining our Thoughts about it; but I hope these selfish Gentlemen will allow, that he who made the World, may think good to have an equal Regard to all the Parts of it, and may think it as much to the Purpose to warn them of approaching Calamities, as he does to warn us; nor let us laugh at the Suggestion, as if it were needless; because the *Indian* Nations who are Pagan, and have no Notion, either of a *God*, or of their own Crimes,

Crimes, can have none of Repentance, which, our religious People say, is all the End that can be suggested in the suppos'd Warnings, or Notices of things.

Hence we know a great many Sceptical Notices, and some Atheistical, are advanc'd; bantering the Opinions of those People, who think they ought to make Religious Uses of such things as these.

But all this, as not worth so much Notice, I shall give no Reply to in this Tract; only shall observe,

1. That we cannot judge absolutely how far these Appearances may or may not Influence the Pagan World; that Heaven may yet think fit to give them the same Intimations, as he does to us; so leaving them the more without Excuse, if they do not take them as Warnings.
2. As for Repentance of Pagans, 'tis what we cannot judge of, nor is it the Busines of this Paper; but suppose them as Notices of Plagues and Infections, so to hint to the People the timely escaping from the Contagion, by flying from one Place to another, or by other Precautions necessary on such Occasions; even in such Cases, they are significant, and not be slighted, either by them or us.

But to remove all the Foundations of Cavil at this Part of the Appearance of Comets, I

mean their appearing in those Countries, where no Religious Use can be suppos'd to be made of it, this may confirm the other Part of our Hypothesis, which relates to *Comets* being the Instruments of the Calamities themselves.

If then they carry with them the Arrows of Death, and that the Poisonous Darts of Plagues on Men and Beast, Sterility on the Earth, and the like, are shot from these Quivers ; we need say no more, than that they are sent to those Parts as Messengers of Destruction, with Commission to spread the Mischiefs they are big with, into such and such Parts, where by their Situation they are oblig'd to diffuse them : That if they do not warn the People of their approaching Ruin, they really bring the Ruin which we think they portend.

Nor is this Thought remote, or unworthy of our present Contemplation ; for if *Comets* are vast Collections of Vapours from this Earth, and from ten Thousand more such Earths as ours are, which, for ought we know, are in Being, in their particular Orbits, and which may supply Vapours and other Substances for such Bodies as the *Comets* may be suppos'd to be ; or if they are Bodies of Fire, feeding continually upon their own Substance, be that as it will, either way, the noxious Fumes of such an immense Flame, are more than sufficient, if Heaven directs, to poison the whole Atmosphere of this Globe, and twenty more such Globes as this, at one time ; so that let the Atheistick World banter the serious Part as much as they please ; if Religion cannot confute them, Philosophy will ; and the Argument may be summ'd up in this short undeniable Conclusion ; N A M E L Y ,
That

That *Comets*, whether they may be taken as Fore-runners of God's Judgments or no, may be, and we have reason to believe are, the Instruments and Natural Causes of them.

That they spread Poisonous and Infectious Particles in the Air, from the noxious Vapours and Exhalations which their vast Mass is compos'd of, or fill'd with ; from whence comes Contagious Diseases, Plagues, &c. upon Man and Beast.

That by Attraction, and drawing from the Earth a great Quantity of the Humid Vapours within our Atmosphere, which would otherwise gather into Cloud, and distill again in Rain ; they occasion terrible Droughts ; Sterility of the Earth ; Destruction of its Product ; and consequently Famine, and Desolation.

That on the other-hand, by violent Exhalations from the Earth, and Emissions from themselves, they may load the Earth's Atmosphere with the contrary Extreme ; so by pouring a Quantity of Rain upon the Earth, either too great for the Earth to bear ; or at improper Seasons, may render the Earth useless to Mankind, and so starve the Inhabitants by over-much Wet. That it is not an improbable Opinion, that the Earth was Drown'd, *An. Mund. 1656*, by the breaking of a watry condens'd *Comet* upon the Surface of its Globe ; and that it shall be at last, *Anno 6000*, be set on Fire by another.

That

That **C O M E T**s may thus be Instruments for inflicting Plagues, Pestilence, Floods, Droughts, nay, even Conflagrations upon the Earth, cannot be deny'd; and why then we should not look upon them with Apprehensions, lest when they appear, they come charg'd with some Commission of that Kind, I cannot understand.

And why such Apprehensions should not put us in-mind of *Nineveh*, &c. will be very hard for any Man in his Sences, to give a Reason for.

*Nulla etas vidit flagrantem impunē Cometem,
Non leve venturum nunciat ille malum.*



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